

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Registration Form

1. Name of Property

historic name Granada Theater

other names/site number N/A

2. Location

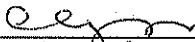
street & number 1013-1019 Minnesota Avenue [N/A] not for publication

city or town Kansas City [N/A] vicinity

state Kansas code KS county Wyandotte code 209 zip code 66101

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this ☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally.  
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [ ].)

  
Signature of certifying official/Title Christy Davis/Deputy SHPO Date 12/23/07

Kansas State Historical Society  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.  
(See continuation sheet for additional comments [ ].)

Signature of certifying official/Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register  
See continuation sheet [ ].  
☐ determined eligible for the  
National Register  
See continuation sheet [ ].  
☐ determined not eligible for the  
National Register.  
☐ removed from the  
National Register  
☐ other, explain  
See continuation sheet [ ].

Signature of the Keeper

Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**8. Statement of Significance****Applicable National Register Criteria**

☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history

☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

Property is:

☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ **B** removed from its original location.

☐ **C** a birthplace or grave.

☐ **D** a cemetery.

☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ **F** a commemorative property.

☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

Architecture  
Recreation//Culture

**Periods of Significance**  
1929-1955**Significant Dates**  
1929**Significant Person(s)**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Boller Brothers

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographic References****Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

☐ previously listed in the National Register

☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register

☐ designated a National Historic Landmark

☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey

# \_\_\_\_\_

☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record

# \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

☐ State Historic Preservation Office

☐ Other State Agency

☐ Federal Agency

☐ Local Government

☐ University

☒ Other:

Name of repository: Kansas City, KS Public Library



*Granada Theater*  
*Wyandotte County Kansas***10. Geographical Data**Acreage of Property less than 1 acre**UTM References**A. Zone Easting Northing  
15 358525 4330881

B. Zone Easting Northing

C. Zone Easting Northing

D. Zone Easting Northing

[ ] See continuation sheet

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**name/title Kristen Ottesen, Architectural Historian and Elizabeth Rosin, Partnerorganization Historic Preservation Services, LLCdate June 2004street & number 323 West 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 112telephone 816-221-5133city or town Kansas Citystate MOzip code 64105**Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets****Maps**A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.**Photographs**Representative **black-and-white photographs** of the property.**Additional Items**

(Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Wade Williamsstreet & number 13001 Wornall Roadtelephone 816-943-0855city or town Kansas Citystate MOzip code 64145

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Granada Theater  
Wyandotte County, Kansas

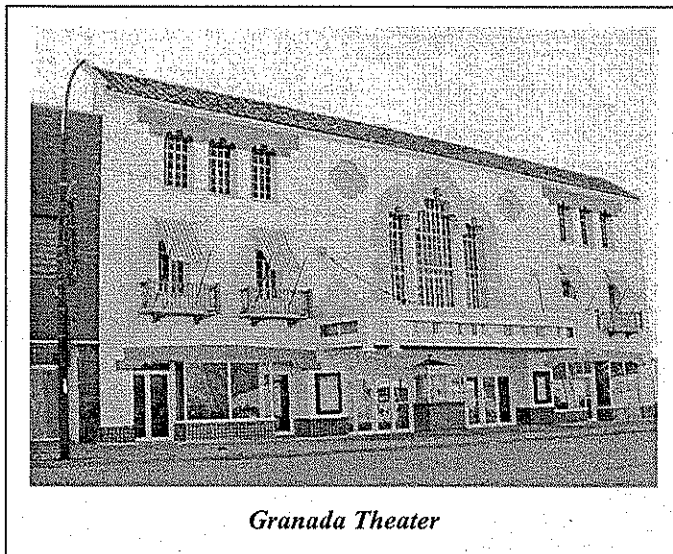
## SUMMARY DESCRIPTION STATEMENT

The Granada Theater, located at 1013-1019 Minnesota Avenue, Kansas City, Wyandotte County, Kansas, is a three-story masonry movie palace that is 81 feet wide and 123 feet deep. It is located just west of Kansas City's historic downtown commercial district. The Granada Theater is an excellent example of the grand movie palace property type, exhibiting the general form, plan, and architectural treatment of movie palaces that appeared in commercial districts across the United States during the second quarter of the twentieth century. The use of materials such as stucco and terra cotta, the form and design of the façade, and the ornamental treatment details present a high style Spanish/Mission Revival design with Moorish influences. The theater is in excellent condition. With the majority of its character-defining stylistic features and original materials intact, the Granada Theater retains a high degree of architectural integrity.

## NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION

### SETTING

The Granada Theater is located at 1013-1019 Minnesota Avenue in a twentieth century commercial corridor just west of Kansas City's historic downtown. The theater directly abuts the concrete sidewalk in front of the building's primary (north) facade. It shares a party wall with the building to the east. Several vacant lots neighbor the building to the west. The rear (south) of the building backs up to the alley, which has a concrete retaining wall on the south side. The urban neighborhood reflects economic decline over several decades and there are vacant buildings and empty lots in the immediate vicinity.



*Granada Theater*

### EXTERIOR

The Granada Theater's primary (north) façade presents a symmetrical broad, flat, rectangular plane that divides into thirds that incorporate multiple bays, the number of which differ on each floor. At the center of the building, the main theater entrance is at street level. Topping the main entrance is a large Palladian window that extends the height of the second and third floors. Flanking the central entrance, the outer thirds of the façade each contain storefronts at the ground floor level and symmetrically arranged fenestration on the second and third stories. The building has a flat roof with a

parapet. A false mansard roof covered with Spanish straight barrel ceramic tile covers the parapet.

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Granada Theater  
Wyandotte County, Kansas

Outlining the large central Palladian window, panels of terra cotta project into the surrounding stucco, creating a quoin-like effect. The top of the window opening forms a tripartite cloverleaf design and, because of this shape, the terra cotta panels form pointed arches. Spiral engaged columns with Corinthian capitals form the mullions that define the opening's Palladian form. The window openings contain multi-light, steel-framed window units that incorporate operable casement sashes. Aligned with the top of the Palladian window and flanking it are two inset terra cotta medallions that roughly delineate the edge of the façade's central bay.

The fenestration in the remainder of the façade flanking the central bay further enhances the Moorish design. It includes two single windows at the second story, above which is a row of three windows at the third story. All of the windows are deeply set, rectangular, multi-light, steel-framed casement sashes with fixed transoms. On each side of the second story, brackets support balconettes with balustrades that project from the wall below the second-story windows. A pair of lanced poles projects from the bottom of each window at an angle to support canvas awnings above the windows. Above the third-story windows, tripartite cloverleaf openings are cut into a single simulated wood lintel that spans the width of and extends beyond the row of windows.

At the ground level, the center portion of the building incorporates a ticket booth that projects between the two recessed entrances. Non-original glazed ceramic tile covers the base of the three-sided, glass-encased ticket booth. The ticket booth has a half-hipped roof and a non-original dentiled cornice extends across the top of the ticket booth and extends over the flanking entrance doors. Two pairs of double-leaf glass and aluminum doors occupy the entrances that provide access to the foyer. Mounted movie poster display cases occupy the walls between the entrance and the storefronts.

Above this entrance system, a projecting, rectangular, metal canopy spans the central bay of the building. This marquee is not original, but is a re-creation based on historic photographs of the original marquee. The sides of the marquee have a shaped parapet design, reflecting the Spanish design influences. Incandescent lights outline the display panels on the front and sides of the marquee. Wood corbels frame panels with the letter "G" that embellish the front corners of the marquee.

The storefronts that occupy the ground floor in the building's outer bays incorporate the only asymmetrical elements of the façade. Although the openings under the faux wood lintel that spans each storefront at this level are the same size, the fenestration is configured differently. On the east end, recessed double entries flank a central fixed-sash display window. On the west end, a single recessed entrance is centered between fixed-sash display windows. Non-original glazed ceramic tile covers the bulkheads below the storefronts. The faux wood lintels correspond to the same decorative treatment on the third story.

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Granada Theater  
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The current color scheme accentuates the building's architectural details. The walls are a pale pinkish-white color. The terra cotta panels and modillions are a medium pink. The faux wood lintels and balconettes are a deep terra cotta. The steel casement windows, doors, columns, cornice, and canvas awnings are turquoise.

The east elevation shares a party wall with the adjacent building and is not visible. The west elevation and rear (south) elevations are fully exposed. Both are unadorned brick walls with no decorative treatments.

### INTERIOR

Directly inside the main theater entrance is the rectangular foyer, which has matte glazed tiles on the floor and plaster walls. Mounted movie poster display cases occupy the side walls and simple plaster moldings and a cornice define the wall-ceiling junction. On the south wall of the foyer, four sets of double, solid wood paneled doors provide access to the lobby.

The lobby spans the width of the building and features a slight arc that hugs the rear (north) auditorium wall. The lobby continues the Moorish theme with an ornamental, arcaded cornice that features shields in each arch and is outlined with a rope motif. The rich green and red paint on the plaster cornice and the scrolled capitals on top of the pilasters appear to be original. Stairways on either side of the entrance lead to the second floor. The solid railing wall of the stairway features a row of circular medallions with serpentine ornamentation. Carpet covers the floors and the textured plaster walls are white. Above the doors on the north wall that lead to the foyer are four recessed, illuminated exit signs. Modern fixtures replace two chandeliers that originally hung from ornamental plaster medallions in the lobby ceiling. The decorative medallions remain in good condition and reflect the paint scheme and style of the cornice. An original terra cotta drinking fountain is set into the west lobby wall. The south lobby wall contains four doors that provide access to the auditorium. Two of these doors flank the concession stand. The other two doors are at the outer walls of the auditorium and are reached by passing through arched openings in the east and west lobby walls and walking down a corridor.

The concession stand located on the south wall of the lobby, is a recent addition. The Granada Theater's original design did not include a concession stand and the back wall of the auditorium originally extended to the columns in front of the concession stand where a doorway led to a central aisle in the auditorium. The addition of the concession stand required the removal of several rows of seats and the abandonment of the central aisle. This appears to be the only significant alteration to the theater's original interior configuration.

The stairs at either end of the lobby provide the access to the second floor. The stairs ascend from the lobby to the landings. From the landings, each run of stairs splits, leading south to the balcony or north to the lounge and restrooms. The lounge occupies the center of the second floor, along the buildings north elevation. Corridors flank the lounge on the east and west sides. The balcony also connects with the lounge through a doorway in the center of the south lounge wall. The flanking corridors provide access to two

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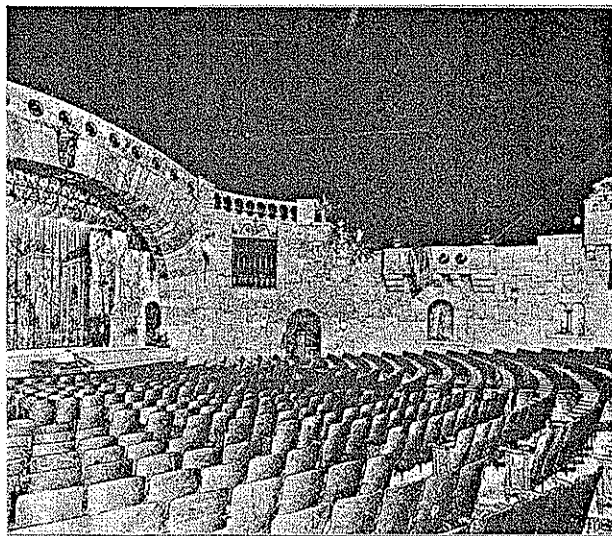
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Granada Theater  
Wyandotte County, Kansas

smaller rooms as well as to the men's restroom on the west end and the women's restroom on the east end. Carpet covers the corridor and lounge floors and the walls and ceilings are plaster. A decorative plaster cornice marks the ceiling-wall junction in the lounge. On the north wall, a band of metal casement windows allows natural light to enter the lounge. A terra cotta drinking fountain, matching the one in the foyer, is mounted on the west lobby wall. Modern recessed can lights and a new ceiling-mounted fixture in the center of the ceiling illuminate the lounge.

The expansive auditorium originally provided seating for approximately twelve hundred patrons on the main floor and in the balcony. Essentially rectangular in shape, numerous curved surfaces soften the lines of the auditorium. The rear (north) auditorium wall curves slightly to the north. The ends of the side walls curve to meet the stage on the south wall. The north wall of the orchestra pit is curvilinear and the front of the balcony has a concave curve. The ceiling is slightly arched. The concrete floor slopes from the rear of the auditorium toward the stage. Under the stage is a basement and a crawl space extends out under the auditorium floor.

Two aisles divide the main theater floor into three sections. The aisles align with the four doorways in the rear (north) wall of the auditorium, with two of the aisles running along the side walls. Seating in the balcony is similarly configured. None of the seating is historic, although the balcony seats date from the mid-twentieth century.



*Historic photograph depicting the  
Granada Theater's original interior  
Photograph courtesy of Wade Williams,  
private collection*

Designed to resemble a Spanish courtyard, many of the auditorium's decorative features reinforce the Moorish styling. The rusticated plaster walls have scored faux mortar joints to imitate stone. Niches and columned arcades further embellish the walls at the ground level. Dovecotes with tile roofs decorate the side walls at the balcony. Balconettes on the upper reaches of the side walls hide cloud projection machines. Designed to resemble a bridge, balustrades flank an arched cornice with medallions that links the proscenium to the side walls. Directly under the balustrades, decorative wrought iron grills covers the wind chambers that contain the organ pipes. The ceiling above the balcony features projecting wood faux rafter tails from which gilded lanterns hang.

Most if not all of the auditorium's original Moorish-



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style light fixtures remain. Two large sconces mounted to the upper area of the wall flank the stage. Two octagonal art glass wall sconces flank the arched doorways on the side walls at the front (south) of the auditorium. Decorative sconces also adorn the areas further back on the side walls and across the north walls of the auditorium balcony and ground floor.

**INTEGRITY**

The Granada Theater continues to convey its historic function as an entertainment venue. Small changes to the façade include the installation of ceramic tile on the storefront bulkheads and ticket booth and the installation of a dentiled molding across the theater entrance. The current marquee very closely resembles the original, which was replaced sometime before 1950. The most significant alterations to the interior were the replacement of the original seats and the installation of the concession stand, which required relocating the back wall of the auditorium. These changes reflect the building's continued use as a movie theater and performance venue and do not significantly impair its ability to convey its original design and function as a movie palace. The Granada Theater retains its historic form, plan, proportions, scale, and massing, the majority of its character-defining elements and materials, and reflects craftsman ship in execution and design. The building retains a very high degree of integrity and clearly communicates its historic associations and feelings as a movie palace.

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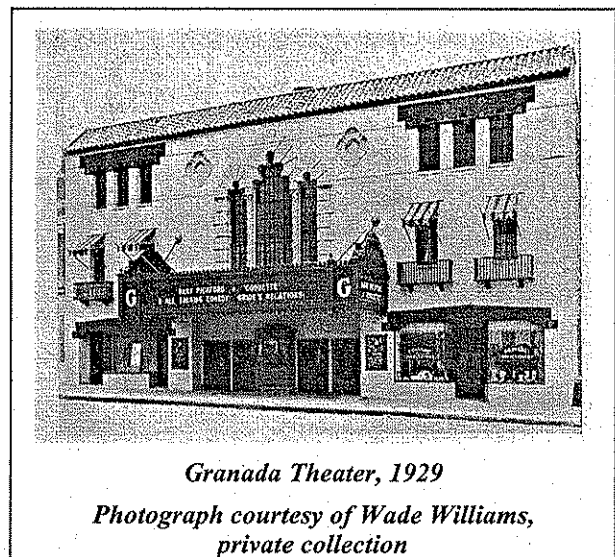
Granada Theater  
Wyandotte County, Kansas

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Granada Theater at 1013-1019 Minnesota Avenue, Kansas City, Wyandotte County, Kansas is significant under National Register Criterion A for the area of ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION and under Criterion C for the area of ARCHITECTURE as documented in the Multiple Property Documentation Form (MPDF) "Historic Theaters and Opera Houses of Kansas." The Granada Theater has direct associations with the historic context "Historical Development of Public Entertainment in Kansas, 1854-1954," as described in the MPDF. Constructed in 1929, it is an excellent example of the grand movie palace property type built in Kansas and throughout the United States mainly in during the inter-war years of the early twentieth century. It is additionally significant as an example of the work by the prolific architecture firm Boller Brothers, which dissolved in 1931. A very rare intact example of an atmospheric theater, it is also the only surviving movie theater of historic or architectural significance in Kansas City, Kansas and the City designated it a Historic Landmark in 1986.<sup>1</sup> While many similar movie palaces have been demolished or drastically altered for other commercial endeavors when more modern movie theaters opened in their vicinity, the Granada Theater is intact and is currently being rehabilitated to serve as an entertainment venue. Its period of significance begins with its construction in 1929 and ends in 1955, the fifty-year threshold for National Register eligibility.

## PROPERTY HISTORY

In 1929, Ben Gorman and William A. Toplikar, were responsible for the construction of the Granada Theater. Gorman, a Russian immigrant, came to America in 1902 and began working as a cabinetmaker. Ten years later, he opened a furniture store at 10<sup>th</sup> Street and Central Avenue in Kansas City, Kansas, where he led the commercial development in that area of the city. In 1927, Gorman established one of the community's largest furniture stores in a building he constructed at the intersection of 10<sup>th</sup> Street and Minnesota Avenue.<sup>2</sup> Gorman worked hard to establish a theater in the vicinity of his new store and, after three failed attempts, was successful in doing so after he joined forces with Toplikar in 1928.



<sup>1</sup> "The Granada Theatre, 1928-29," Kansas City, Kansas Planning Department [document online]; available from <http://www.kckplanning.org/granada.htm>; Internet; Accessed 12 October 2003.

<sup>2</sup> "Two Responsible for New Theater," *Kansas City Kansan*, 22 May 1929, Kansas City, Kansas Public Library, Microfilm.

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Granada Theater  
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Toplikar, a realtor who had connections to Midwest Film Distributors in Kansas City, Missouri and Midwest Theaters, Inc., negotiated a fifteen-year lease with these companies for the new theater.

Toplikar and Gorman hired the well-known architecture firm Boller Brothers to design their new theater. By 1928, Carl and Robert Boller had experience designing many theaters in the state of Kansas. Their work in the Kansas City area included the two-thousand-seat Electric Theater at 542-546 Minnesota Avenue, just five blocks east of the Granada, which was built in 1922, as well as the 1,100 seat Art Theater erected, in 1920 at 1808 Central Avenue.<sup>3</sup> In 1929, general contractor E. Dreier & Son built the Granada Theater for \$150,000.<sup>4</sup>

The *Kansas City Kansan* described the Granada Theater when it opened. California stucco in a "light chocolate hue" with "golden" terra cotta trim covered the exterior. The large canopy, fabricated by the Wright Sheet Metal company, featured changeable electric signs made by Midwest Flexlume Sign Corporation. The concrete sidewalk in front of the theater was of various colors to harmonize with the colors of the theater.

M. E. Reiser and Sons designed the theater's interior. The auditorium walls, modeled from California stucco, were "jointed to resemble heavy ashlar stone." Landscapes painted in the side niches created the illusion of distance. The arrangement of the upholstered seats provided excellent sightlines as well as comfort. The lighting scheme consisted of three colors controlled by dimmers to produce any desired combination of lighting.<sup>5</sup> A 1929 newspaper account stated that "its simplicity and ruggedness is a departure from the overspectacular theater interiors which have been featured in recent theater buildings the country over."<sup>6</sup>

Designed as an atmospheric theater, the Granada Theater represented a new concept in movie palace design introduced by architect John Eberson in the early 1920s.<sup>7</sup> Executed in historic romantic revival styles, an

<sup>3</sup> "The Granada Theatre, 1928-29," [document online]; available from <http://www.kckplanning.org/granada.htm>. Both the Electric Theater and the Art Theater have been demolished.

<sup>4</sup> "Two Responsible for New Theater," *Kansas City Kansan*, 22 May 1929, Kansas City, Kansas Public Library, Microfilm.

<sup>5</sup> "New Theater Blends Spain with Present," *Kansas City Kansan*, 22 May 1929, Kansas City, Kansas Public Library, Microfilm.

<sup>6</sup> "Debut for Theater is Tomorrow Night," *Kansas City Kansan*, 22 May 1929, Kansas City, Kansas Public Library, Microfilm.

<sup>7</sup> Eberson designed the Uptown Theater (1928) in Kansas City, Missouri and the Orpheum Theater (1922) in Wichita in the atmospheric style. Both of these theaters are listed in the National Register of Historic Places. "The Granada Theater, 1928-29," [document online]; available from <http://www.kckplanning.org/granada.htm>.

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atmospheric theater's design was to provide the patron with the feeling of sitting in an outdoor courtyard at night. They painted the domed ceiling dark blue and hid the ceiling-wall junction behind the side walls to create the appearance of an expansive nighttime sky. Small electric lights were set in the ceiling to represent twinkling stars and "cloud machines" along the side walls projected drifting clouds across the "sky." The design of the Granada Theater's auditorium resembled a Spanish courtyard surrounded by stone walls with a starlit sky overhead. A variety of props, including artificial flowers and foliage, urns, and artificial birds further embellished the auditorium to enhance the patron's experience. The lights in the dark ceiling and the cloud machines remain intact and operable.

During the 1950s, as television became increasingly popular, many other theaters in Kansas City, Kansas, including the Electric Theater, closed. Although the Granada Theater continued to show movies, the downtown area experienced a general decline and the theater closed in the late 1960s. Over the past three decades, a succession of owners attempted to maintain the theater. Since 1976, the theater's current owner, Wade Williams, has purchased the Granada Theater on three separate occasions to protect it from demolition. Williams is currently in the process of restoring the theater.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> "Restored Theaters Ready for Their Close-ups: Rio and Granada Resurrected from Cinema Graveyard," *Kansas City Star*, 15 May 2000, Kansas City, Kansas Public Library, Microfilm.

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Section 10, Photographic Documentation Page 10

Granada Theater  
Wyandotte County, Kansas

## GEOGRAPHIC DATA

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

West ½ of lot 7, all of lots 8-11, Block 127, Kansas City, Wyandotte County, Kansas

### BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

This nomination includes the parcel of land that is historically associated with the resource.

## PHOTOGRAPH LOG

Photographer: Kristen Ottesen  
Date of Photographs: June 2004  
Location of Negatives: Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas

### Photograph

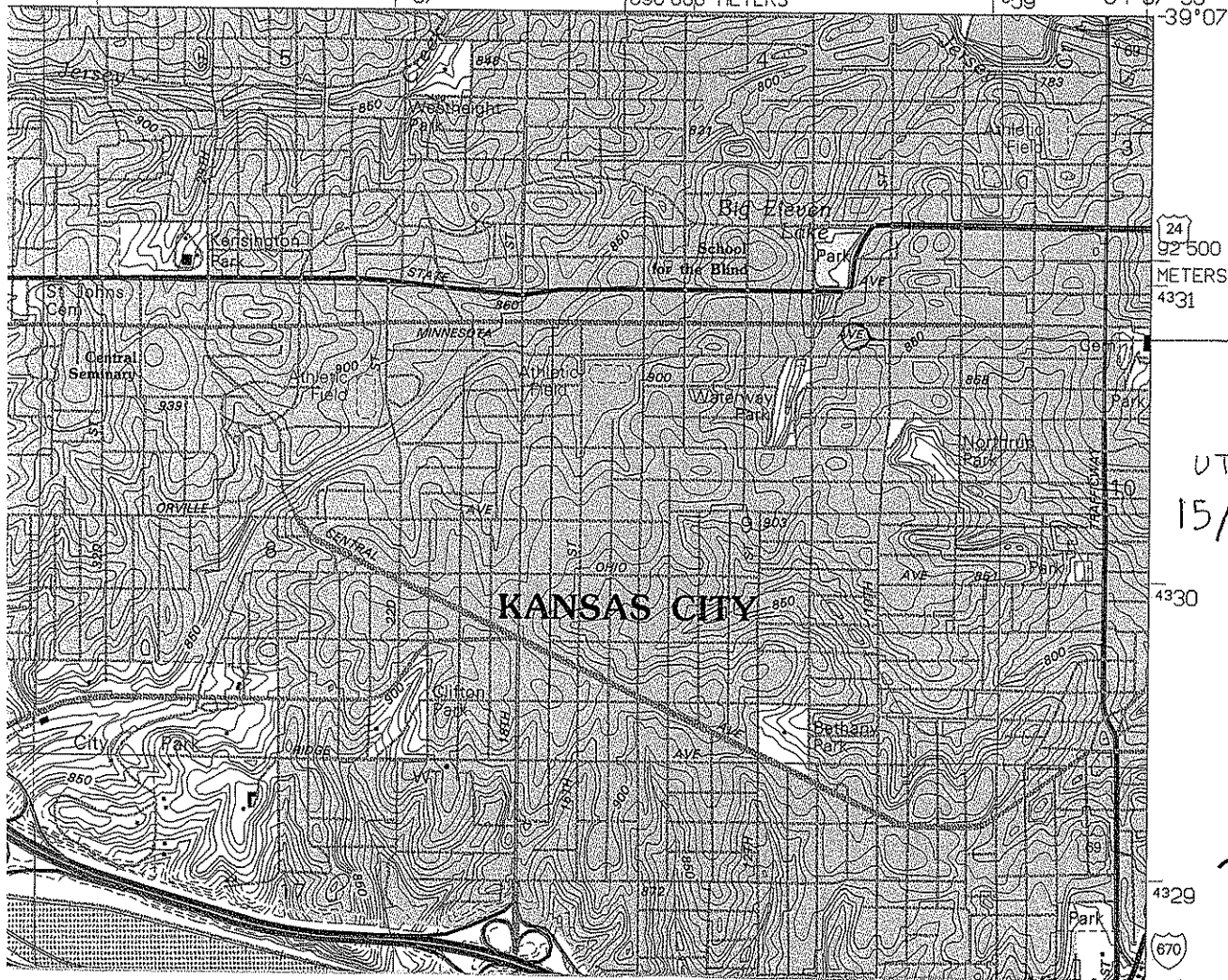
#### Number

#### Camera View

1. Front (north) elevation
2. Streetscape, view to the southeast
3. Rear elevations, view to the northeast
4. Storefronts and entrance
5. East end of the second and third floors on primary façade
6. Center of the upper façade area
7. Lobby, view to the east
8. Foyer, view to the east
9. Front of the auditorium
10. East side of the auditorium
11. Rear of the auditorium
12. Orchestra pit at the stage
13. Balcony, view to the east
14. Lounge on the second floor
15. Drinking fountain in the lounge
16. Light fixture in the foyer
17. Plaster cornice in the foyer

SHAWNEE QUADRANGLE  
KANSAS  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

40' 00" 357 1690 000 METERS 359 94°37' 30" 39°07' 30"



Granada Theater  
Kansas City,  
Wyandotte Co.,  
Kansas

UTM Reference:  
15/358525/4330881